

## The Sunday School.

### SUNDAY SCHOOL OFF THE TRACK.

The writer was in a Sunday School not very long ago where the object and aim seemed to have been entirely forgotten a long time since. The superintendent began by giving out a notice that he had a very important announcement to make; that immediately at the close of the school he wanted all the young ladies who were to appear in the Rose Bower theatrical performance that was to take place in the church on Wednesday to come to the front. "No," he said, "on further thought I will see them at once in one of the church parlors during the Sunday School session, and I want to see all the young men who are to trim up the church for that occasion right after Sunday School. The boys and girls who are to take part are earnestly requested to have all their clothes and their masques ready by to-morrow night, that the drill may be complete. Do not forget that at the close of this service also the elocutionist who is to drill some of the children in their parts will be in the large parlor to hold one of the last rehearsals. Oh yes," he added, "I have almost forgotten one thing. I want the ticket sellers to report right now how many tickets they have sold." After this was over, he said: "We will now sing a verse and then we will have five minutes for the study of the lesson." The lesson session had already begun when he said, "I find I have forgotten a notice, so I find we shall have to close this session in about three minutes in order to give out the notice regarding some little matters of business to come before us." The children looked glad to hear this, and we did not wonder they did, but why they called it Sunday School we were unable to understand.

Perhaps it was a good thing, however, that the name was not changed, for the name of Sunday School always has some good influence anyhow. But what responsibility the superintendent or teachers had in regard to the souls of scholars we were unable to see! The scholars were full of frivolous talk, the children had nothing to think of, and in the class in which we were placed the principal topic was whether they should give an oyster supper in two weeks or whether it should be in three weeks. The discussion was very warm, but finally it was decided to give it in two weeks.

The collection was taken, and that was the only thing that reminded one of being in a Sunday School. As soon as that was taken the superintendent rapped his bell, and every one was called to order.

We have wondered many times since whether other schools have fallen into ways not as extreme as this, but of mixing

in the things of the world and mixing them so much that there is nothing left of the plan and the spirit of the Sunday School session. It is wonderfully easy to break down the barriers. It seems as though it only needed to start when every vestige of the original plan of Sunday School work is forgotten.

We were not surprised to hear afterwards that there was a dancing department connected with this Sunday School, and that nearly all, old and young, knew how to dance and attended balls, even, although some of them were very young.

In the near future we hope to have a report of a Sunday School of the right kind, conducted in an entirely different manner, and whose main object is to save souls.—*Gospel News.*

## Book and Tract Department.

### CHANNELS FOR TRACT DISTRIBUTION.

The church has been organized for a special purpose, viz., the salvation of souls and the development of saints. To accomplish this object there must not only be a working out of our own salvation, but a faithful making known of the truth to others, that which we have seen and heard and experienced, must be declared unto others that they may share the privileges and associations we enjoy.

It is true that this can be done by faithful preaching, earnest singing, humble praying, and consecrated living, and through all the services of God's house and connections therewith. But there is another agency used by men and demons for their respective ends—the printing press; this wonderful power, consecrated to God and used by his servants can be made an active partner in the great work of saving souls. The church has this power in force, but more help is need in scattering the seed it produces. Then let every channel in the church be used for this purpose.

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#### 1. THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

This part of the church is making use of literature, in the shape of quarterlies, lesson papers, etc. Yet it seems to me there is room for a little extra work. That Sunday school teacher, coming into such close touch with his and her scholars, knowing their needs, could slip a little tract into hands thoughtful or doubtful, that would help clinch a truth or switch a soul on the right track. I have held meetings in large and old churches where there was a large corps of teachers and not a word said to the children about salvation; a little less geography and a little more Christ would be better. Bring out all the Christ there is in the lesson and when you can clinch the truth with a tract do so.

#### 2. THE WOMAN'S SOCIETY.

The Brethren church appreciates the help of women; in proportion to her members she probably has more women preachers than any other church in the country. They are breaking their alabaster boxes over the pierced feet of Jesus, and the world is being perfumed with his love and truth, and one way they can help on the work is by scattering literature. Let each Sister's Society have an eye to this line of work and as they go about in the work scatter their leaves of healing from the tree of life, and they will be like "Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others which ministered unto him of their substance."

#### 3. THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIETY.

The K. C., the C. E., and the G. should all be made special channels for scattering literature; each organization should have a tract committee composed of church members who should look after this matter, the money could be raised easy, it would take but little to keep a supply always on hand, and the wise distribution would pay a thousand per cent. If the pastor or president is indifferent about this work, as is too often the case, let two or three young people put their heads together and do something. Do not be afraid to push the work, as the electric power speeds along the wire and clicks the message from operator to receiver, so let each Young People's Society be a wire over which God and the church can send messages to a dying world encourage the timid and save the lost.

#### 4. INDIVIDUAL EFFORT.

You need not depend on organized channels, do all the individual work you can. You know men and women, you have felt like talking to them but are timid, let the tract open up the way, slip one in an envelope now and then. I frequently get tracts this way, and have sent out thousands and have assurance of conversions from their effects, individual effort. It tells—suppose each Christian would make a convert during the coming year, what a mighty host would be saved for Christ.

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#### THE OBJECT OF THE CHURCH.

Allow me to close as I opened. To seek and save, this was the object of the church when re-organized. The historian says of the little band of eight; "after all had come up out of the water, and had changed their garments, they were also at the same time made to rejoice with great joyfulness, and by grace they were deeply impressed with these significant words. Be ye fruitful and multiply." That is our work today,—be fruitful and multiply, and a consecrated printing press will be a wonderful aid in this the greatest of all works, the work for which Christ died.

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